



RENDERS THANKS FOR SMALL POTATOES

(Written Specially for The Bulletin.)

"I admire the spirit of the old Dutchman who, when his leg was broken, said he was thankful it was not his neck."

So runs the sentence in an old "Reading-book" which came down to me, more than fifty years ago, from my father's school days.

If you ever read Dickens' story of "Martin Chuzzlewit," you will remember that "Mark Tapley" was sorely troubled because he never got into quite enough trouble to make it a credit for him to be "jolly." He had the idea that it was easy to be happy when things went smoothly, but that there would be some real glory in being hilariously "jolly" when everything was going wrong.

For the satisfaction of his own soul's desire, I wish Mark could live on my ranch this season. I'm fairly optimistic, but it has taken pretty nifty work for me, thus far, to "keep a stiff upper lip."

I've already told you how, seduced and over-tempted by the false promise of early spring, I violated my better judgment by putting in some garden truck along in March. Of course, that turned out badly. I might have known it would, and I blame nobody but myself. But since then several other things have been happening.

Those early seeds came up, feebly and suspiciously, just in time to catch a second winter in April. Still, some of them made a live thing. When real seeding time came along, it was bitterly cold and we had to delay operations till the ground became workable and the weather recently warm. Early in May, the local drought asserted itself. The nights were cold; the days sunless and chilling; steady winds dried out the surface, and for four weeks, not a drop of rain fell. Nor was there any dew visible three mornings out of four.

Freshly planted seeds lay dormant; some of them rotted; some were eaten by worms and maggots; only a few survived to show, later.

In the midst of this, the tent-Caterpillars appeared in hordes. They attacked the apple and cherry trees, even the plums and grape-vines. There wasn't an hour of daylight when it was practicable to spray the trees, because of the incessant high winds which blew the spray out of the very nozzle. Furthermore, on such partly protected and chilling days, the spray dried out the surface, and the arsenate of lead spray, which is specially recommended for these pests, seemed to inconvenience them not at all. They thrived on it. So I went back to the old-fashioned oil-soaked torch, and burned the nearest neighbor at all. I spent every evening for fourteen days, going over and over my few trees. One night I burned twenty-seven nests of one small Sweet Bough, and the second night after, burned seventeen more which had been rebuilt on the same tree. I was careful, but I was careful as one could be, and most of them survived the scorching and, when the weather cleared up a bit, blossomed luxuriantly.

Then came a nice little freeze, starting from the North Pole, and every apple and cherry and plum blossom was blasted, the young leaves shriveled up, and the starting foliage of the grape-vines utterly killed. So far as this year's yield is concerned, I might just as well have let the worms have the trees.

That same freeze—about the middle of May—killed every stalk on my asparagus bed. I had been cutting, from two thousand stalks, about one hundred a week. In the two weeks succeeding this frost, I cut less than ten pounds, all told. It also froze back all my early peas, which were just beginning to blossom, so that the vines yellowed and died, and had to start all over again. It even froze beet-tops, lettuce, and young cabbage and celery plants in an unprotected seed-frame.

Well, we resented and reset and generally soldered up the wreck as well as we could, and waited to see what would come next.

It came. We got a couple of helpful rains, and a few days of summery warmth. Then, June 8th and 9th, appeared the next polar wave. It froze ice in the horse-tub about a quarter of an inch thick and killed the foliage even of the butternut and white ash trees in the woods. My early potatoes had, by this time, got to be about a foot high. They had been cultivated for five times and were nearly ready for the final shovel-plowing. Frozen to the ground, they may start up again and give me a few bushels of hazel-nuts. But, as

a market crop, they're gone—gone where Pharaoh's hosts went and where last summer's birds-nests are. An acre or two of beans also disappeared. A part of the sweet-corn—perhaps a third or a half of the hills—managed to pull through, just how, I can't for the life of me remember. But this which had just come into bud again for the second time, got another sorry blackening.

I don't see that it hurt chickweed or burdock any. But, really, I don't lay much store by those two crops.

Out in the grass-lands, the story is about the same. The May drought seems to have stunted the growth, so that nothing is doing there. A walk this morning across my small meadows disclosed no appearance of anything like a hay crop. The mowing fields are hardly good pasture.

My neighbors, mostly hay, corn and potato farmers, all tell me about the same thing: potatoes frozen off, corn badly injured or killed; hay the poorest prospect ever known.

Altogether, it's a fine opening for an agricultural Mark Tapley to shine in. Don't you think so?

For, of course, while your experience hasn't been the same as mine in details, I have no doubt it has been about as bad in general.

The government crop reports, such as I have seen, indicate that the season has been a bad one, thus far, over most of the east. On the other hand, they assert that conditions west of the Mississippi are unusually hopeful. The farmers out that way have had a fine spring and their crop prospects are above the average.

Right there is where the old Dutchman's optimism, as related in the ancient reading-book, comes in. The Dutchman, extending over so many degrees of latitude and across so many meridians of longitude that even the devil of bad weather can't cover it all at the same time.

When they give steady and undivided attention to us of the east, they have got to skip the west, because their blasting wings aren't broad enough to cover the whole shooting-match.

Really, we of the east haven't been able for a good many years to raise our heads above the clouds. We've had to draw on the west and the south to fill up our measure. We shall have to do it again, this year, a little more than usual, that's all. But there's no reason to expect a famine. There is going to be enough to go 'round, if we're reasonably careful and don't waste too much.

In such lands as China and India, when crops fail, they fast all over dusk, every locality is hit about as badly as any other. No one section has a plethora from which to supply the needs of another. No one has a surplus, there, means horrid famine, with year-long misery to millions, and actual starvation to many thousands.

With us, it means simply that we've got to buy a little more from the west and the south. But we aren't going to starve, and we aren't going to have to call on the world for charity.

Furthermore, we are,—the most of us,—going to "take our medicine and look pleasant." Or, if not sure we can, then as pleasant as we can.

Also, we're going to make the best of the bad job. One neighbor, who had a dozen or so acres of fine potatoes ruined, has already bought enough buckwheat to sow the patch with. If he can't have potatoes to eat, he will at least make a try for a few flapjacks, and perhaps something over to feed the chickens.

Buckwheat cakes for breakfast and chicken for dinner;—if a fellow never gets any worse living than that, he'll manage to scrape through!

Even those of us who leave the vines to grow again, in the hope of a crop of little things,—even we aren't wholly without compensation. Said a neighbor's wife to me yesterday: "There are worse things than little potatoes. Take 'em and scrub 'em and scrape 'em and boil 'em like peas with a cream sauce and they're better than sawdust pudding. If you don't believe it, come to dinner some day next winter and I'll show you." I have known many who, from choice, took little potatoes for baking, first rubbing off some of the tough outer skin, of course, on the ground that they were sweeter and more nutritious. No doubt there are other ways to use them.

If it's going to be a year of small potatoes and few in a standstill in all we have to do is to eat small potatoes and thank our stars that we have got 'em to eat.

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NEW LONDON LOSES FACTORY

Hopson and Chapin Factory Closed and Work Will Be Gotten Out Elsewhere—Need of Tenement Houses—No Action Taken Towards Accepting Privileges Granted By Legislature.

A month ago a For Sale or To Rent sign was placed on the Hopson and Chapin plant and this was taken as indication of the settlement of the estate of John Hopson, deceased, but it was believed that it would not seriously affect this long established manufacturing industry. A week ago the seventy-five or more employees were told that they could leave the plant at will, and this was taken to mean that inventory was to be taken and that there would be shut down for a few weeks, and, perhaps longer, with a possibility of reorganization of the concern. But now comes positive statement that the plant is to suspend operations the end of the month, and the employees are given no hope for future employment in the concern they have served so long. It is understood that the Hopson and Chapin system of heating will be continued and that the material used in the installation of the system will be manufactured elsewhere. This concern has been in operation in New London for more than twenty-five years and is among the largest machine and foundry plants in the city.

This plant was established before the civil war and at that time was known as Nay's foundry. Since then the plant has been greatly enlarged and improved and has been occupied in whole or part by varied industries and at one time it was the plant of the Brown Cotton Gin company. The property is too valuable to remain idle and there is no doubt but that there will be sale or lease in the near future. Of late years the chief business of the Hopson and Chapin company has been foundry work with engine cylinders as a specialty. The casting for the Lathrop engines were done here and much casting for the New London Ship and Engine company and other manufacturing industries. The passage of the Hopson and Chapin company will be regretted by the whole people of New London, as it is the kind that will be missed even in a growing and progressive city.

With such a successful and growing industry as the New London Ship and Engine company running to capacity it is but natural that kindred concerns should seek location here, some of the product being what is needed by the ship and engine company or kindred thereto. Almost at the point where the company has erected a new plant and is working to capacity. The Hatch Engine company has located in a part of the plant abandoned by the W. D. Forbes company, and now the Sterling Machine company is being installed in the balance of the same plant. Other concerns are contemplating location in New London and there will be room for some of them in the present Hopson and Chapin plant. It would seem that the only real bar to the manufacturing growth of the city was the lack of suitable tenements for well-paid mechanics and the other class of tenements required by the unskilled laborers and their families. This is a problem that must be solved or New London will remain at a standstill in the line of manufacture and growth. No business can locate in a city where the employees cannot be properly housed.

The committee of the New London Business Men's association are making earnest endeavors to provide the ways and means of building of tenement houses, they find that there are altogether too many Missourians in New London who have to be shown before they invest any of their surplus cash in real estate. With short work days growing shorter in almost every line of the building trades and wages going higher, carrying with it increased cost in building material, causes delay and deliberate consideration on the part of those with money to spare to invest in tenement houses. The cost of construction has increased largely, but it is difficult to rent at increased rental to meet the increased cost of construction. If there is a way out of these local conditions the committee will find that way.

As yet the court of common council has made no move towards enacting into ordinances any of the measures suggested by the committee. It is supposed that there was urgent need for the ordinance relating to building lines which the council has now the right to make and which will be more binding than the old time Richards rule and cement. It not only gives the right to define the building lines on new streets but also on other streets, with power to remove portions of buildings if necessary in the interest of the damages and benefits plan. Not long ago there was so much demand for just such an ordinance to fit a special case that the legislators were hurried into passage of the act amending the charter so that the city could exercise the power without question of legality.

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suspicion that there is just a little personality connected with the transaction on the part of some members of the council who are not the closest political friends of the former business mayor of the city. Houses have been moved through public streets where big boulevards have been out down to make way for the temporary street obstructor, despite strong protest and threat of law suit. Bad blood was raised between the parties in interest which has not been improved as time goes on, but the house was moved, just the same.

The house that former Mayor Armstrong desired to move is not an old rickety, but a really first-class dwelling house, which he wants removed to other land owned by him in order to make room for the beautification of his home surroundings, and greatly improving the general appearance of the already beautiful Granite street. In the opinion of those who are disinterested, and who have investigated, the trees that would be trimmed to admit the passage of the house would be improved by the trimming, but they do believe the present action of the council shows a desire to trim the ex-mayor and not give him the privilege that has always been granted to others and without question. There is a feeling that this house be moved with out further interference, and then frame an ordinance that would prohibit the moving of houses through the streets in the future.

The Brainerd and Armstrong company took the pick of the striking weavers last Monday morning and with the addition of others began work in the weaving department and without the slightest sign of violence on the part of those who were rejected by reason of their prominence during the strike period and who were believed to be among the instigators of the trouble. No department is being worked almost to capacity and from surface indications the labor problem is at an end. But it cannot all be told in advance of what may happen even in well-regulated communities, or manufacturing establishments. While all is going on smoothly in the mill, Mr. Golden, the president of the National Textile union and an organizer arrived in the city on Thursday, perhaps to take in the Yale-Harvard race, and perhaps to do just a little organizing on the part of the union. He is not given to sport and does not generally quit a fight after the first round.

President Golden has had a long experience in matters pertaining to unionizing textile workers, and is forever at work in the interest of the workers. He is a man of a progressive when threatened attack is hinted at by the industrial workers of the world. There is talk of this latter organization tampering with the employees of the silk mill, and incidentally another mill located in New London. It may be possible that President Golden does not propose to permit the opposing labor organization to get a foothold in New London and he is here to hold what he has and strengthen it beyond the influence of the No God No Flag gang. He will probably endeavor to have the mill people cooperate in this work and choose what he may term to be the better of two evils.

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